

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

UTICA MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY,
Plaintiff,

V.

LIFEQUOTES OF AMERICA, INC., and
JERRY COOPER, INC., d/b/a COLOR
ONE PHOTOLAB,

Defendants.

NO. CV-06-0228-EFS

ORDER RULING ON MOTIONS
HEARD AT THE FEBRUARY 7,
2011 HEARING

A hearing occurred in the above-captioned matter on February 7, 2011, in Richland. Plaintiff Utica Mutual Insurance Company ("Utica") was represented by Lon Berk, Sergio Oehninger, and Grant Degginger. Defendant Jerry Cooper, Inc. ("Cooper") was represented by Margaret Wetherald and Mark Griffin. Before the Court were Defendant Cooper's Motion for Protective Order Re: Rule 30(b)(6) Deposition of Cooper, d/b/a Color One Photolab (ECF No. [317](#)), Cooper's Motion for Protective Order (ECF No. [335](#)), Cooper's Motion to Compel (ECF No. [344](#)), and Utica's Motion for Sanctions (ECF No. [349](#)). After reviewing the submitted material and relevant authority and hearing from counsel, the Court was fully informed. This Order supplements and memorializes the Court's oral rulings: the Court grants and denies in part Cooper's two protective-

1 order motions, denies Cooper's motion to compel, and denies with leave to
 2 renew Utica's motion for sanctions.

3 **A. Defendant Cooper's Motion for Protective Order Re: Rule 30(b)(6)**

4 **Deposition of Jerry Cooper, Inc., d/b/a Color One Photolab**

5 Defendant Cooper asks the Court for an order preventing Utica's
 6 request for a Rule 30(b)(6) deposition of Jerry Cooper, Inc. d/b/a Color
 7 One Photolab ("Cooper") because 1) Cooper has never had independent
 8 knowledge of the information sought, 2) the deposition invades
 9 attorney-client privilege and work product, 3) it would constitute an
 10 extreme burden and be inefficient, and 4) Cooper has already responded to
 11 discovery on the same issues.¹ Utica opposes the motion and asks the
 12 Court to either 1) order a Cooper designee to submit to a deposition, or
 13 2) preclude Cooper from introducing evidence or testimony on the matters
 14 listed in Utica's Rule 30(b)(6) notice. Utica also asks the Court to
 15 award the reasonable expenses and attorneys' fees it incurred in opposing
 16 this motion.

17 1. Background

18 Cooper is the class representative of the certified class in *Jerry*
 19 *Cooper, Inc. d/b/a Color One Photolab v. Lifequotes of America, Inc.*,
 20 Case No. 04-02-40304-9-SEA (King Cnty. Sup. Ct.) ("the Underlying
 21 Action"). Cooper is also a Defendant in this action as the owner of
 22 LifeQuotes' coverage and bad faith claims against Utica on the class'
 23 behalf.

24 ///

25 ¹ Before Cooper filed the motion, the parties adequately
 26 telephonically conferred on two occasions. LR 37.1.

1 On May 13, 2009, Utica issued a Rule 30(b)(6) notice to Cooper;
 2 Utica issued a revised notice on November 15, 2010. (ECF No. 320-2).
 3 This notice asks Cooper's Rule 30(b)(6) designee to answer questions on
 4 the following topics:

- 5 1. The Underlying Action.
- 6 2. Communications concerning settlement of the Underlying Action.
- 7 3. Information about LifeQuotes' assets.
- 8 4. Any notice provided to members of the class Cooper claims to
 represent.
- 9 5. Any retainer agreement between Cooper and Keller Rohrback LLP,
 Riddell Williams, P.S., or Williamson & Williams.
- 10 6. The *Dubsky, Lin, Omerza, Ehat and USA Tax Law Center* lawsuits.
- 11 7. The Utica policies, including applications.
- 12 8. Any insurance policies issued by other insurers covering
 LifeQuotes.
- 13 9. Communications between Cooper and LifeQuotes or Paul Piubeni.
- 14 10. Communications between LifeQuotes and Utica.
- 15 11. Communications between Mr. Piubeni and Utica.
- 16 12. Communications between Cooper and Utica.
- 17 13. LifeQuotes' bankruptcy filing and proceeding.
- 18 14. Mr. Piubeni's bankruptcy filing and proceeding.
- 19 15. Cooper's knowledge of the automatic stay concerning litigation
 against LifeQuotes.
- 20 16. Cooper's affirmative defenses and counterclaim.
- 21 17. The damages sought by Cooper in this action.
- 22 18. Cooper's responses to Utica's discovery requests, including
 without limitation Cooper's efforts to locate, compile, and
 produce documents responsive to Utica's discovery requests in
 this action.
- 23 19. Any actual or proposed settlement demand and settlement
 negotiations made in connection with the Underlying Action,
 including all discussions about any actual or proposed
 settlement or negotiation.
- 24 20. Cooper's willingness to settle the underlying claims for policy
 limits, and its valuation of any settlement with and the
 exposure faced by LifeQuotes.
- 25 21. LifeQuotes' assets before the Underlying Action, during the
 Underlying Action, and before and after any judgment was
 entered in the Underlying Action.
- 26 22. The representations made by Cooper at the March 9, 2007
 proceedings in the Underlying Action before the Honorable Dean
 S. Lum.

(ECF No. 320-2.)

Cooper is a small specialty photo laboratory in Pioneer Square in Seattle. Jerry Cooper has owned and operated the lab for more than thirty

1 years. (ECF No. 319.) In 2004, Mr. Cooper contacted Keller Rohrback
2 LLP about receiving unsolicited faxes. *Id.* Since then, he has met with
3 counsel periodically. *Id.* Mr. Cooper is seventy-one and no longer works
4 full days at his business given that he is "concerned that I do not
5 remember things as well as I used to." *Id.* Mr. Cooper only has
6 independent knowledge on topic No. 5 (retainer agreement). *Id.*

7 2. Standard

8 Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 30(b)(6) provides:

9 In its notice or subpoena, a party may name as the deponent a
10 public or private corporation, a partnership, an association,
11 a governmental agency, or other entity and must describe with
12 reasonable particularity the matters for examination. The
13 named organization must then designate one or more officers,
14 directors, or managing agents, or designate other persons who
15 consent to testify on its behalf; and it may set out the
16 matters on which each person designated will testify. A
17 subpoena must advise a nonparty organization of its duty to
18 make this designation. The persons designated must testify
19 about information known or reasonably available to the
20 organization. This paragraph (6) does not preclude a
21 deposition by any other procedure allowed by these rules.

22 (Emphasis added.)

23 The designee's role is to provide the entity's interpretation of
24 events and documents. *United States v. J.M. Taylor*, 166 F.R.D. 356, 361
25 (M.D.N.C. 1996). It is not expected that the designee have personal
26 knowledge as to all relevant facts; however, the designee must become
27 educated and gain the requested knowledge to the extent reasonably
28 available. *Int'l Ass'n of Machinists & Aerospace Workers v.*
29 *Werner-Masuda*, 390 F. Supp. 2d 479, 487 (D. Md. 2005) (recognizing that
30 a Rule 30(b)(6) deposition represents the entity's knowledge and not that
31 of the individual deponent). The designee may become educated by
32 reasonably obtaining information from documents, past employees, or other

1 sources. *Great Am. Ins. Co. of N.Y. v. Vegas Constr. Co., Inc.*, 251
 2 F.R.D. 534, 541 (D. Nev. 2008).

3 Yet, courts have recognized that a designee need not be deposed on
 4 matters that are more reasonably inquired into by other forms of
 5 discovery. *J.M. Taylor*, 166 F.R.D. at 362 n.7. Also, courts have
 6 declined to require a Rule 30(b)(6) deposition on matters that would
 7 inevitably invade attorney work product. *EEOC v. McCormick & Schmick's*,
 8 No. WMN-08-CV-984, 2010 WL 2572809, 6 (D. Md. June 22, 2010); *see also In*
 9 *re Linerboard Anti-Trust Litig.*, 237 F.R.D. 373, 380 (E.D. Penn. 2006)
 10 (recognizing that a Rule 30(b)(6) deposition may improperly be used as a
 11 maneuver to discover facts within the attorney's knowledge without asking
 12 counsel directly).

13 3. Authority and Analysis

14 The Court disagrees with Cooper's suggestion that Mr. Cooper need
 15 only answer questions relating to No. 5 (retainer agreement). *See Bd. of*
16 Trustees of Leland Stanford Jr. Univ. v. Tyco Int'l Ltd., 253 F.R.D. 524,
 17 526 (C.D. Cal. 2008) (Rule 30(b)(6) deponent has an obligation to educate
 18 himself as to matters regarding the entity). Yet, the Court finds a
 19 number of the topics are not topics upon which Cooper (the entity) has a
 20 basis for knowledge: Nos. 3 (information about LifeQuotes' assets), 7
 21 (Utica's policies), 8 (insurance policies issued by other insurers
 22 covering LifeQuotes), 10 (communications between LifeQuotes and Utica),
 23 11 (communications between Mr. Piubeni and Utica), 13 (LifeQuotes'
 24 bankruptcy filing and proceeding), 14 (Mr. Piubeni's bankruptcy filing
 25 and proceeding), and 21 (LifeQuotes' assets). Cooper and the class are
 26 strangers to the contractual relationship between LifeQuotes and Utica.

1 Accordingly, Utica must engage in other forms of discovery to obtain this
2 information.

3 The Court agrees with Cooper that questions on the remaining topics
4 inevitably will invade attorney-client privilege or work-product
5 information. The Court previously ruled, however, that Cooper's filing
6 of a bad-faith counterclaim waived the attorney-client privilege and
7 work-product protections as to settlement information in the Underlying
8 Action because Utica needs access to this information to disprove that
9 LifeQuotes was not harmed by Utica's alleged failure to engage in a good
10 faith effort to affect settlement. (ECF No. 329.) Therefore, because
11 the attorney-client privilege and work-product protection are waived as
12 to the Underlying Action's settlement information, communications, and
13 documents, the following topics are "on the table" during the Rule
14 30(b) (6) deposition: Nos. 1 (Cooper lawsuit in part: as it relates to
15 settlement information and retainer agreement), 2 (communications
16 concerning settlement of Underlying Action), 5 (retainer agreement), 19
17 (actual or proposed settlement demand and negotiations in the Underlying
18 Action), 20 (Cooper's willingness to settle underlying claims), and 22
19 (representations by Cooper at March 9, 2007 proceeding). While Mr.
20 Cooper declared that he has only personal knowledge of the retainer
21 agreement (No. 5) (ECF No. 319 ¶ 6), the Court believes that Cooper
22 counsel in the Underlying Action must have discussed with him topic Nos.
23 1, 2, 19, 20, and 22 to confirm his understanding and to obtain his
24 approval before taking action. Therefore, it should not be difficult for
25 Cooper counsel to reacquaint him with those discussions and prepare him
26 for a Rule 30(b) (6) deposition about them. Additionally, a Rule 30(b) (6)

1 designee does not need to answer questions based solely on his personal
 2 knowledge; rather, the designee must engage in reasonable information
 3 gathering in order to answer questions about the entity's knowledge. See
 4 *Int'l Ass'n of Machinists*, 390 F. Supp. 2d at 487.

5 The Court recognizes that there are likely discoverable facts as to
 6 each of the remaining topics: Nos. 1 (remainder of Cooper lawsuit
 7 information), 4 (notice to class members), 6 (other lawsuits), 9
 8 (communications between Cooper and LifeQuotes/Mr. Piubeni), 12
 9 (communications between Cooper and Utica), 15 (Cooper's knowledge of
 10 automatic litigation stay), 16 (Cooper's affirmative defenses and
 11 counterclaim), 17 (damages sought by Cooper), and 18 (Cooper's responses
 12 to Utica's discovery requests). However, the attorney-client privilege
 13 and work-product protections have not been waived as to these matters and
 14 questions into these topics will inevitably lead to attorney-client
 15 privileged and work-production information. See *EEOC v. HBE Corp.*, 157
 16 F.R.D. 465, 466 (E.D. Mo. 1994) ("[T]he selection and compilation of
 17 relevant facts . . . is at the heart of the work product doctrine.").
 18 Accordingly, if Utica has not already done so, it is free to obtain the
 19 relevant non-protected information through other forms of discovery. See
 20 *Buntrock*, 217 F.R.D. at 446 (quashing a Rule 30(b) (6) notice which sought
 21 inevitably to discovery counsel's mental impressions and where the facts
 22 themselves were obtainable by other sources).

23 Accordingly, the Court grants and denies in part Cooper's motion:
 24 Mr. Cooper (or another designee) is to testify as to topic Nos. 1 (in
 25 part), 2, 5, 19, 20, and 22; the Court denies Utica's request for fees.
 26 ///

1 **B. Cooper's Motion for Protective Order**

2 Cooper asks the Court to preclude Utica from deposing Margaret
 3 Wetherald because she was not counsel of record in the Underlying Action
 4 and there are other ways to obtain the facts Utica seeks.² Utica opposes
 5 the motion, contending that the evidence shows that Ms. Wetherald was
 6 involved in settlement-related matters concerning the Underlying Action.

7 1. Background

8 In the Underlying Action, Cooper was represented by Keller Rohrback
 9 LLP partners Mark Griffin and Fred Schoepflin, along with Rob Williamson
 10 of Williamson and Williams. At some point during the Underlying Action,
 11 a decision was made by Cooper's counsel to contact Ms. Wetherald given
 12 her experience relating to insurance coverage and litigating complex
 13 commercial matters.

14 On January 10, 2007, Ms. Wetherald sent an email to Cooper's
 15 Underlying Action counsel, stating: "[g]iven that you would take
 16 substantially less than policy limits in cash, you may want to open the
 17 offer below \$6 million" (ECF No. 336-1.) Before and after this
 18 date, Ms. Wetherald had been cc'd on letters and emails which discussed
 19 settlement and judgment offers, such as an April 17, 2006 email which
 20 stated:

21 [Piubeni] testified that around 1,500,000 (500,000 per year)
 22 unsolicited faxes were sent between 2000 and 2003, with the
 23 number per year getting larger each year Based upon
 24 Piubeni's testimony, I will prepare a judgment in the amount of

25 ² Before Cooper filed this motion, the parties sufficiently met and
 26 conferred to discuss the disputed discovery issue. LR 37.1.

1 \$750,000,000 Once we have the judgment in hand, we can
 2 begin the task of either convincing the insurance company that
 3 there is coverage or litigating the coverage issue with them.

4 (ECF No. 359, at 8; see also ECF Nos. 360, Exs. 3-4.) In the Underlying
 5 Action, Ms. Wetherald was also listed as counsel of record in the
 6 signature block of Cooper's Motion for Entry of Second Supplemental
 7 Judgment filed on January 29, 2008. (ECF No. 360, Ex. 2.)

8 2. Standard

9 Under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 30, "a party may take the
 10 testimony of any person." Fed. R. Civ. P. 30(a)(1). Accordingly, the
 11 federal rules do not specifically exempt counsel. *United Phosphorus,*
 12 *Ltd. v. Midland Fumigant, Inc.*, 164 F.R.D. 245, 247 (D. Kan. 1995). Yet,
 13 based in part on Rules 26(b)(3)(B) and 45(c)(3)(A)(iii), case law has
 14 placed the burden of establishing the propriety of taking opposing
 15 counsel's deposition on the requesting party. See *Shelton v. Am. Motors*
 16 *Corp.*, 805 F.2d 1323, 1327 (8th Cir. 1985); see also *Mass. Mut. Life*
 17 *Ins. Co. v. Cerf*, 177 F.R.D. 472, 479 (N.D. Cal. 1998) (noting that
 18 *Shelton* "is generally regarded as the leading case on attorney
 19 depositions"). The requesting party must establish that "(1) no other
 20 means exist to obtain the information than to depose opposing counsel;
 21 (2) the information sought is relevant and non-privileged; and (3) the
 22 information is crucial to the preparation of the case." *Shelton*, 805
 23 F.2d at 1327 (internal citation omitted). This discovery limitation does
 24 not apply, however, if a party seeks to depose opposing counsel regarding
 25 a concluded lawsuit, the information regarding the concluded lawsuit is
 26 crucial to the current lawsuit, and the deposition will not disclose

1 current litigation strategy. *Pamida v. E.S. Originals, Inc.*, 281 F.3d
2 726 (8th Cir. 2002).

3 3. Authority and Analysis

4 Consistent with the Court's prior ruling, Utica may discover
5 Cooper's settlement discussions and the understandings underpinning its
6 settlement negotiations in the Underlying Action to ascertain whether
7 Cooper was willing to settle for policy limits. (ECF No. 329.) Although
8 Cooper submits that Ms. Wetherald was not counsel of record in the
9 Underlying Action, there is a reasonable question as to her involvement
10 in settlement discussions and negotiations and her knowledge of her case.
11 Ms. Wetherald was cc'd on emails relating to settlement before the state
12 court's first entry of judgment in March 2007. Ms. Wetherald clearly has
13 relevant and non-privileged information that is crucial to Utica's case
14 preparation. Yet, Utica may be able to obtain this information without
15 deposing Ms. Wetherald: Utica is to first resume the depositions of
16 Messrs. Griffin, Schoepflin, and Williamson, who were counsel of record in
17 the Underlying Action.

18 Accordingly, Cooper's motion is granted and denied in part. Ms.
19 Wetherald is not to be deposed at this time regarding her involvement in
20 the Underlying Action. However, if Utica deems it necessary, it may seek
21 leave to take her deposition after completing the depositions of Messrs.
22 Griffin, Schoepflin, and Williamson.

23 **C. Cooper's Motion to Compel**

24 Cooper asks the Court to require Utica to provide a supplemental
25 response to written discovery regarding Utica's communications with Mr.
26 ///

1 Piubeni.³ Utica opposes the motion and also asks the Court to award it
 2 its reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

3 1. Background

4 Cooper previously-served Utica with First Request for Interrogatory
 5 No. 15, which asked Utica to:

6 Identify each and every communication that any employees or
 7 agents of your company, including without limitation, Paul
 8 Walters and/or Mike Marley, had with Paul Piubeni after you
 9 first received notice of the underlying action. For each
 10 communication, identify:

- 11 (a) Whether it was oral or written;
- 12 (b) When, where and between whom it took place;
- 13 (c) The substance of the communications; and
- 14 (d) All documents that evidence or relate to such
 15 communication

16 (ECF No. 346, Ex. 2 (emphasis added.)) Utica provided the following
 17 response:

18 On April 21, 2006, Mr. Walters sent a letter declining
 19 coverage. On May 3, 2006, after Utica had reconsidered its
 20 position, Mr. Walters sent a reservation of rights letter. See
 21 UCF 000074.

22 On July 21, 2006, Utica underwriting mailed a Notice of
 23 Nonrenewal to Lifequotes. See UUF 00003.

24 On or about August 1, 2006, Utica underwriting received a
 25 letter from Mr. Piubeni of "PJP Insurance Services, Inc.
 26 (formerly LifeQuotes)" requesting cancellation effective August
 27 1, 2006. See UUF 000050.

28 ³ Before Cooper filed the motion, the parties sufficiently met and
 29 conferred regarding this discovery dispute. LR 37.1. Initially, Cooper
 30 also asked the Court to require Utica to produce documents on its
 31 privilege log dated May 1, 2006, and June 2006. Cooper withdrew this
 32 request in its Reply. Accordingly, the Court does not address it.

1 On or about August 3, 2006, Utica underwriting sent a
 2 Notice of Cancellation. See UUF 000002.

3 During the specified time period, no other communications
 4 have been had with Mr. Piubeni by the underwriting department
 5 or by the "coverage" side of the claim department. Regarding
 the "liability defense" side of the claim department, the
 interrogatory seeks work product and Utica incorporates its
 response to Request for Production No. 1.

6 *Id.*

7 Cooper also sent a set of Requests for Production (RFP). RFP No. 3
 8 asked Utica to produce "[a]ll documents identified in response to
 9 Defendant Jerry Cooper's First Interrogatories to Defendant [sic] Utica
 10 Mutual." (ECF No. 346, Ex. 3.) Utica provided the following response:
 11 "Subject to the specific responses and objections to those
 12 interrogatories, said documents already have been or are being produced."

13 *Id.*

14 On March 16, 2009, the Court granted Cooper's Motion to Compel
 15 Disclosure of Redacted Claims File Documents, which required Utica to
 16 disclose the communications that LifeQuotes and Mr. Piubeni had with
 17 Utica. (ECF No. 179.)

18 In fall 2010, before Mr. Piubeni had been deposed, Utica filed a
 19 Declaration of Mr. Paul J. Piubeni dated September 29, 2010. (ECF No.
 20 313.) After reviewing this declaration, Cooper asked Utica to supplement
 21 its responses to Interrogatory No. 15 and RFP No. 3:

22 particularly as to all communications between Utica and Mr.
 23 Piubeni, either as an individual or as the principal of
 24 Lifequotes, through the present. Should Utica withhold any
 25 responsive documents on grounds of privilege or work product,
 Cooper asks that Utica supplement its privilege logs to include
 all of the documents withheld, including those post-dating
 entry of the third judgment in the Underlying Action.

1 (ECF No. 346-1 at 9-10.) Utica declines to supplement its response,
2 contending that it disclosed all communications that it had with Mr.
3 Piubeni before the discovery was served and related documents.

4 2. Standard

5 A district court has wide discretion in controlling discovery.
6 *Little v. City of Seattle*, 863 F.2d 681, 685 (9th Cir. 1988). Moreover,
7 pretrial discovery is ordinarily "accorded a broad and liberal
8 treatment." *Hickman v. Taylor*, 329 U.S. 495, 507 (1947). A party may
9 object to a request for production; however, the grounds for objection
10 must be stated with specificity. Fed. R. Civ. P. 34(b)(2). Absent a
11 valid objection, the production of evidence can be compelled regarding
12 any matter "relevant to the subject matter involved in the action" or
13 "reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence."
14 *Id.* 26(b)(1). This broad discovery right is based on the general
15 principle that litigants have a right to "every man's evidence," and that
16 "wide access to relevant facts serves the integrity and fairness of the
17 judicial process by promoting the search for truth." *Shoen v. Shoen*, 5
18 F.3d 1289, 1292 (9th Cir. 1993). And a party has a duty to supplement or
19 correct its disclosure or response in a timely manner. Fed. R. Civ. P.
20 26(e).

21 3. Analysis and Authority

22 Cooper elected to utilize the word "had" in Interrogatory No. 5.
23 The Court finds Utica sufficiently answered Interrogatory No. 5 as
24 phrased; Utica only has a duty to supplement its response to
25 Interrogatory No. 5 and RFP No. 3 if it discovers additional
26 communications that it "had" with Mr. Piubeni before receiving

1 Interrogatory No. 5. Accordingly, the Court **denies** Cooper's motion.
 2 Cooper is permitted, however, to depose Mr. Piubeni regarding all
 3 conversations that he has had with Utica. The Court declines to grant
 4 Utica's request for reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

5 **D. Utica's Motion for Sanctions**

6 Utica asks the Court to sanction Cooper for failing to comply with
 7 the Court's Order requiring Cooper to provide settlement-related
 8 information by refusing to allow Utica to resume the depositions of
 9 Cooper's counsel in the Underlying Action, Messrs. Griffin, Schoepflin,
 10 and Williamson, and provide timely and complete documents containing
 11 settlement-related information.⁴ For its failures, Utica asks the Court
 12 to compel Cooper to provide the information and award Utica its incurred
 13 attorneys' fees and expenses or enter a finding that Cooper would not
 14 have settled the underlying class action for an amount less than or equal
 15 to the applicable limit of Utica's policies. Cooper opposes the motion,
 16 contending that it fully complied with the Court's December 22, 2010
 17 Order.

18 1. Background

19 On January 28, 2009, Cooper provided a supplemental privilege log
 20 that identified "co-counsel communication re settlement negotiations"
 21 documents as privileged. (ECF No. 264, Ex. 7.) The following were
 22 entries on the privilege log:

23
 24 ⁴ The parties may have benefitted from additional conferring prior
 25 to Utica filing this motion. However, the Court finds the record
 26 sufficient to rule on the motion.

- 1 • August 6 & 7, 2006 Emails among Griffin, Williamson,
2 Schoepflin, & Hugg, COKRST06448-51 / 7202-05
- 3 • January 10, 2007 Email - Griffin to Wetherald,
4 COKRST07262-74 / 7868-80
- 5 • January 10, 2007 Emails among Williamson, Griffin, &
6 Schoepflin, COKRST06504-07 / 7258-61
- 7 • January 31, 2007 Email - Griffin to Schoepflin,
8 COKRST06522
- 9 • September 7, 2007 Email(s) - Griffin to Wetherald,
10 Falecki, Schoepflin, COKRST06589 / 7354-55
- 11 • August 19, 2008 Email(s) - Schoepflin to Falecki,
12 Wetherald, COKRST 06958-62 / 6967-7050 / 7053-7064 /
13 8213-8296 / 8299- 8312

8 (ECF No. 352.)

9 In May 2010, Utica deposed Cooper's attorneys of record in the
10 Underlying Action: Messrs. Williamson, Griffin, and Schoepflin. During
11 each of these depositions, Ms. Wetherald objected to questions relating
12 to LifeQuotes' exposure and settlement values on the grounds that the
13 topics were irrelevant to this declaratory judgment action. (ECF No.
14 374, Exs. 1-3.) Messrs. Williamson, Griffin, and Schoepflin did not
15 answer questions on these topics. (ECF No. 352-3-5.) The depositions
16 were suspended.

17 On November 9, 2010, the Court heard oral argument on Utica's Motion
18 to Compel (ECF No. 262). The Court orally granted the motion, and on
19 December 22, 2010, entered an Order memorializing and supplementing its
20 oral ruling. (ECF No. 329 at 8-9.) The Order granted Utica's request to
21 "require Cooper to produce 1) information related to Cooper's willingness
22 to settle for the \$2,000,000 policy limits in the state-court action, and
23 2) Cooper's settlement valuations." *Id.*

24 On December 16, 2010, Cooper produced approximately 103 pages of
25 settlement-related materials. (ECF No. 352, Ex. 8.) These emails,
26 letters, and documents contain redactions. Cooper produced its privilege

1 log on December 28, 2010. *Id.* Ex. 9. And on January 12, 2011, Cooper
2 asked the Court to address the status of the contested depositions in an
3 upcoming hearing. (ECF No. 340.) Utica filed the instant motion on
4 January 14, 2011. (ECF No. 349.)

5 2. Standard

6 As discussed above, the Court has wide discretion in controlling
7 discovery. *See Little*, 863 F.2d at 685. And this Court's general
8 discovery philosophy is more rather than less, and sooner rather than
9 later.

10 3. Authority and Analysis

11 As discussed above, the Court allows Utica to resume the depositions
12 of Messrs. Griffin, Williamson, and Schoepflin; each individual may be
13 deposed for a total of seven hours. The Court denies, with leave to
14 renew, Utica's request for Cooper to provide unredacted versions of the
15 recently-disclosed settlement information. After taking the depositions,
16 Utica may renew its request for unredacted versions.

17 The Court declines to impose financial or evidentiary sanctions at
18 this time. Ms. Wetherald's objections at the depositions were proper: at
19 the time of the May 2010 depositions, she reasonably believed that
20 settlement-related information was protected by either the
21 attorney-client privilege or work product. Following the resumed
22 depositions, Utica may renew its request for sanctions if there is
23 obstructive behavior during the deposition or the remainder of the
24 discovery process.

25 **E. Conclusion**

26 For the above-given reasons, **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:**

1. Defendant Cooper's Motion for Protective Order Re: Rule 30(b)(6) Deposition of Jerry Cooper, Inc., d/b/a/ Color One Photolab (**ECF No. 317**) is **GRANTED AND DENIED IN PART**.

2. Cooper's Motion for Protective Order ([ECF No. 335](#)) is **GRANTED AND DENIED IN PART.**

3. Cooper's Motion to Compel (ECF No. 344) is DENIED.

4. Utica's Motion for Sanctions (ECF No. 349) is DENIED WITH LEAVE TO RENEW.

IT IS SO ORDERED. The District Court Executive is directed to enter this Order and provide copies to all counsel.

DATED this 10th day of February 2011.

s/Edward F. Shea
EDWARD F. SHEA
United States District Judge

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